

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-07 COA-02 INT-08 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 SS-20 SP-03 NSC-07 PM-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4147

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, VS

SUBJECT: CHARUNPHAN ON THE FISHING DISPUTE WITH SOUTH VIETNAM

FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ITSARANGKUN NA AYUTTHAYA  
HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 7. FOLLOWING IS AN  
UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF HIS COMMENTS ON THE  
FISHING DISPUTE WITH SOUTH VIETNAM.

IT HAS BEEN SEEN THAT THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. A  
NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, HAS PROCLAIMED OR PUT IN FORCE A  
LAW TO EXTEND ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS FOR FISHING BY  
ANOTHER 50 MILES  
IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL LIMIT OF 12  
MILES, UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW. ITS PROCLAMATION  
EXTENDING ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS BY AN ADDITIONAL 50  
MILES IS AN ACTION WHICH THAILAND CANNOT RECOGNIZE,  
EVEN ON THE PART OF A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY WHICH IS A  
FRIEND ALSO. CONSEQUENTLY INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED WHEN  
THAI FISHING BOATS ENTERED THAT AREA, AND ANY SHIPS  
ENTERING IT ON BUSINESS OR EVEN PASSING THROUGH ONLY,  
MIGHT BE SEIZED BECAUSE THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES CONSIDER  
THAT THAT AREA IS WITHIN THEIR TERRITORIAL WATERS LIMIT  
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UNDER VIETNAMESE LAW; THEREFORE IT MUST NOT BE VIOLATED

UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM WITH A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY THAT IS A FIREND ALSO THEREFORE WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO FIND A WAY FOR IT TO BE REMEDIED AND OVERCOME THROUGH THE HOLDING OF TALKS AND BY PEACEFUL MEANS. YOU MOST PROBABLY KNOW FROM NES REPORTS AND FROM STATMENTS ISSUED HOW WE CONTACTED THE REPLIC OF VIETNAM FROM THE VERY START AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FIRST SEIZED THAI FISHING BOATS AND ARRESTED THEIR CREWS. AT THAT TIME, A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF OUR FISHING BOATS WERE SEIZED AND OVER 100 THAI FISHERMENT WERE ARRESTED. THOS FISHERMEN WERE LATER RELEASED, THROUGH THE COOPERATION OF THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR HERE AS WELL AS BECAUSE OF NEGOTIATIONS HELD IN SAIGON SIMULTANEOUSLY. A SHORT TIME LATER, ANOTHER INCIDENT OCCURRED IN WHICH ANOTHER THAI FISHING BOAT WAS SEIZED, BUT THIS TIME WHEN THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FIRED ON THE BOAT A THAI FISHERMAN WAS KILLED. THIS WAS AN INCIDENT THAT COULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED; THERFORE WE INSTRUCTED OUR EMBASSY IN SAIGON TO MAKE A FORMAL PROTEST TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. ABOUT A WEEK LATER, WE INVITED THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR TO COME TO THE MINISTRY IN ORDER TO SEEK A WAY FOR A PEACEFUL SULUTION TO BE REACHED. WHEN I MET HIM I PRESENTED AN AIDE-MEMOIRE TO HIM AND WE EXPLAINED TO HIM THE STAND WE TAKE FROM A LEGAL ANGLE. WE FURTHER EMPHASIZED THAT SINCE OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE CLOSE AND GOOD FRIENDS, A PEACEFUL SOLUTION SHOULD BE SOUGHT THROUGH THE HOLDING OF TALKS, I PROPOSED FOR BOTH COUNTRIES TO SEND DELEGATIONS TO HOLD TALKS, EIGHTER HERE IN BANGKOK OR IN SAIGON. THE REPLY I RECEIVED A SHORT TIME LATER, AFTER THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR WENT TO SAIGON TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND AFTER HE RETURNED HERE, WAS THAT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WOULD GLADLY WELCOME AND INVITE A THAI DELEGATION TO GO TO HOLD TALKS IN SAIGON. THERE WAS HOWEVER, SOME SLIGHT CONFUSION BECAUSE WE HAD FIRST SAID THAT THE TALKS OUGHT TO BE HELD AT A HIGH LEVEL AND I HAD ASKED AT WHAT LEVEL THEY SHOULD BE. I WAS INFORMED BY THE VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR THAT HIS GOVERNMENT PROPOSED FOR THE TALKS TO BE HELD AT THE LEVEL OF ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, UNCLASSIFIED

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WHICH I INTERPRETED AS MEANING A CAREER OFFICIAL POSITION COMPARABLE TO THE POSITION OF UNDER SECRETARY. THEREFORE, I REPLIED AT ONCE THAT IN THAT CASE WE WOULD SEND OUR UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AS HEAD OF THE DELGATION TO GO AND HOLD TALKS. LATER, THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT SUGGESTED THAT BETTER RESULTS MIGHT BE OBTAINED IF THE TWO DELGATIONS HOLDING PRELIMINARY TALKS WERE AT THE LEVEL OF EXPERTS, THUS PAVING THE WAY FOR THE

HOLDING OF TALKS AT A HIGH LEVEL LATER, THAT THIS MIGHT  
BE A MORE SPEEDY WAY TO FIND A SOLUTION. IN OTHERWORDS,  
THE PROPOSAL WAS FOR TALKS TO BE HELD AT A LOWER LEVEL

FIRST, FOR EXPERTS TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH TALKS ON DETAILS  
AND TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THEM BEFORE HOLDING TALKS AT A  
HIGH LEVEL. WE ARE WAITING TO HEAR WHAT DEFINITE DECISION  
WILL BE REACHED REGARDING THE HOLDING OF TALKS. I WISH  
TO EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS PROFFT THAT WE ARE NOT REMAINING  
INDIFFERENT IN REGARD TO SUCH INCIDENTS, AND THIS IS ALSO  
AN EXAMPLE SHOWING HOW WE PUT IN PRACTICE THIS PRINCIPLE  
OF FOREIGN POLICY.  
KINTNER

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